“my talks to dogs”

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a play in many parts
for one mind in three voices

Dominyka Kaselytė

2026

the text may be marked.

torn.

added to.

read aloud.

performed.

rewritten.

or given away entirely.

if it keeps living somewhere else,

i'm glad it kept moving.

if you make something with it,

i'd love to see where it went.

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for being tired of language.
for being tired of explanations.
for being tired of pretending to know.

for believing in yourself
before anyone else does.

and then, still -

to Ieva, Sonia, Daria,
who stood next to me always.
to Aleksandra, Arnas, Aistė and Aistė,
for the same, and for handling me.
to Dominykas, Matas, Justas, Evaldas, Kristiana,
Andrius, Martynas, Ugnė, Marcel,
who remind me how to live and how to love.
to my sisters.
to my ma.
to my papa.

i wouldn't be me without you.

"I suffer from a chronic nausea — after I'm with people. The awareness (after awareness) of how programmed I am, how insincere, how frightened."

— Susan Sontag, As Consciousness Is Harnessed to Flesh: Journals and Notebooks, 1964–1980

the voices

there are three of them.
they are one mind.
you are welcome to overhear.

I

the one who tells.

META

the one who watches me think.

COSMIC

the one who keeps reaching.

the room

A dark room. Smoke, sometimes.
Light shining from above

Someone stands in the room.
Or sits. Or kneels.

The voices come from _,
from all around _,
from inside__.

_ is the room. The room is__.

You walk in.
You are welcome.
You will not be asked anything.

ONE

the room, before anything.

I

I was told I could be anything.

What a beautiful thing to say to a child.

Yet what a logistically cruel thing to say to a person who then has to become someone.

A doctor.

An artist.

A lover.

A failure.

A brand.

An Idea.

A warning sign.

Pick one.

No — all of them.

No — optimise.

Silence.

META

The reach for *logistically cruel* instead of just cruel.

The qualifier softens it.

You do this. You have done it your whole life.

It makes the cruelty sound like an administrative error.

Easier that way. For everyone. Especially for you.

Silence.

I

Rules were never outside of me. They came in like the weather. Through the open door, the window, the radio, the look on someone's face.

Silence.

And then they were THE weather.

Silence.

Which pieces did I choose?
Which ones arrived while I was looking somewhere else?

META

That question assumes a self that existed before the instructions.

What if there is no prior self?

What if the self is only ever the assembly?

Silence.

I

So you borrow an output:

God. Success. Art. Love. Revolution. Healing. Content.

You build your whole thing around it.

Ten years later you don't know if you chose it or if it chose you.

COSMIC

Every civilisation has built itself this way.

From bones it found. From stones someone left behind.

Silence.

Nothing is original. Everything is borrowed.

Silence.

The trouble is not the borrowing.

Silence.

The trouble is forgetting who you took it from.

Silence.

I

I used to draw. Badly. Happily. For no reason.

It felt unacceptable.

Meta

Nobody told you to stop.

Silence.

That it the thing about internalisation.
Nobody has to say it out loud.

You just stop.

TWO

The light shifts. Somewhere, faintly, the sound of paper, dampness of onse scent.

I

They gave me instructions.
Not directly. Just everywhere.

Silence.

In tone.
In looks.
In silence.
In who was offered tea and who was not.
In whose laughter was answered and who passed through the room with gusts.
In which kind of girl was forgiven for crying.

Am I a person or a long-term project?
Is this a life or a group assignment I forgot to opt out of?

Long silence.

Every instruction was a piece of paper.
Birds build nests like this.
Twigs.
Hair.
A bit of plastic if they find it.
They build until the nest holds.
I built until something held.
I almost believed it was me.

Very long silence.

COSMIC

The construction of a self is not a sickness.It is what arriving here without instructions for arriving here looks like.

Silence.

The trouble is not the assembly.

Silence.

The trouble is being asked to present it as a whole. And call it a self.

I

Here is what I keep not saying clearly enough.

Silence.

Some of the rules kept me alive.

Some of them taught me how to eat.

How to sleep.

How to call my mother on Sunday.

Silence.

The trouble is not the rules.

Silence.

The trouble is we stopped asking which ones.

Who chose them?

What for?

Silence.

META

I have spent a lot of time being angry at structures that were actually feeding me.

Silence.

I have spent time defending structures that were killing me.

Silence.

I confused the two more than once.

I am probably still confusing them somewhere.

Long silence.

I

A dog passed me on a walk last week.

It looked at me.

Silence.

THREE

Guitar returns, faintly. A handwritten note appears projected — scratched out, underlined hard, almost through the paper.

I

I tried.

Silence.

Not casually.

Silence.

Aggressively.

Discipline and softness.

Cold showers and warm baths.

God and no God.

Gym and collapse.

Productivity and burnout.

Healing and self-destruction.

Journaling and then ignoring the journal for four months and then feeling guilty about the journal and then journaling about feeling guilty.

Long silence.

I am completely informed.

Silence.

And completely unable to act.

Silence.

META

Like sinking in a beanbag perfectly.
You will not get up.
You have nowhere and everywhere to be.
This is the bag, not the problem.

Silence.

I

Cynicism is not laziness.
It's scar tissue.

Silence.

And scar tissue is real.
It is just not the same as skin.

Long silence.

META

There was a period last autumn, where I tried six things in eight weeks and none of them worked.
I kept thinking — maybe the next one.
Maybe the next version of me will know.
She didn't either.
But she showed up.
I'll give her that.

Silence.

META

I was very cynical for about a year.
Perhaps for most of my life.
I thought it was clarity.
It wasn't clarity.
It was grief wearing my leather jacket.
It was still grief underneath it all.
It just looked a lot cooler.

COSMIC

Every generation thinks it is the first to see clearly.
The sky does not care if you see it.
Awareness is not leverage.
The crow knows this.
It is why she does not look up.

I

I am writing this down.
I am aware.
Doing it anyway.

Silence.

META

You learned that sentence young.

It works on teachers, men in bars, concrete slabs.

Silence.

META

It does not work on the thing it is supposed to be working on.

Silence.

It just makes it harder to hide.

FOUR

The light shifts. The drone deepens.

META

Everything wants to fall apart.

A garden ungardened becomes a field.

A field unfielded becomes a forest.

A forest unforested becomes ash.

The work goes the other way.

Anything that stays standing has to keep paying for itself.

A body.

A relationship.

A country.

The house you visited once a year as a child, the one where someone always lit the stove before you arrived.

Silence.

Eventually some of them get too expensive. And then they end.

Long silence.

Not because they were evil. Because they ran out.

Very long silence.

Math.

META

When I first heard this I felt relief.

Not everything is evil. Some things are just tired.

Silence.

I used this on a lot of things.

It helped.

It also let me off hooks I should have stayed on.

Silence.

If collapse is math, who is accountable?

Long silence.

I

I used to be very certain about what was real.

Then I started drawing spirals at two in the morning.

Silence.

I stopped caring what to call it.

Long silence.

META

Three years ago you would have been embarrassed by this.

Silence.

Three years ago you were smarter.

You were also more protected.

Silence.

I

I am not sure I want the protection back.

COSMIC

A tiny baby universe smaller than dust smaller than anything one Planck second old not born not unborn premortial the seed not yet committed to being anything the white hole spitting everything out the bubble appears all possibilities expand stars planets atoms life the body mirrors the cosmos the kabbalah draws this as a tree I draw it as an hourglass the body mirrors the cosmos.

Silence.

And yet.

Silence.

And yet. Yet. Yet....

COSMIC

Highly intelligent beings die in confusion.

No purpose.

No design.

No appreciation for the attempt.

Silence.

Stars burn out.

Children get cancer.

Wars end and start again.

Silence.

The whole universe is at our disposal and we cannot overcome it.

The scale only makes it worse.

Long silence.

META

What were the spirals about?

I

A container. That was already drawing more than it gave back.

Silence.

I

The kind that asks you to be smaller in small increments. So small you do not notice.

Silence.

The kind where you sob in your room while someone laughs through the wall.

Long silence.

META

And?

Silence.

I

I let it…

Silence.

I let it…

Silence.

I was the container too. I was on both sides of it.

Silence.

I live in two places at once.

Silence.

I

A concrete city and a wet meadow.

The dance in the haze and the breath in the forest.

Silence.

I am both.

I cannot pick.

The container was the same shape in both.

FIVE

Music becomes quieter than the silence. A triangle appears, projected. Three points. No labels.

I

I became smaller on purpose.

Silence.

Not consciously.

But precisely.

Silence.

Smaller is safer. Smaller is quieter. Smaller is harder to reject.

If you are small, you cannot fail loudly.

Very long silence.

META

Not consciously but precisely. Implies clarity about an unconscious thing that may not be earned.

Silence.

Maybe it was not precise. Maybe it was just small.

META

Maybe you are giving yourself credit for what was actually just fear.

Silence.

Or maybe fear can be precise.

Maybe that is the most precise thing there is.

Silence.

There are three permanent temptations.

Become so good you lose force — compassion without backbone, goodness that becomes martyrdom aesthetics.

Become so forceful you lose goodness — strength becoming contempt, technically impressive, spiritually ugly.

Or hold both. Not resolved. Not comfortable. Just held. At a great personal cost.

Long silence.

You have done all three.

Not in sequence.

Often at the same time.

Silence.

META

The first felt most like you for a long time. Very soft. Very giving. Very good at not needing anything.

Silence.

What you did not see was how much anger was living in the softness. How much control was in all that giving.

Silence.

The second happened fast. You scared yourself.

Silence.

COSMIC

Every ethical tradition has circled this. The person who is only good becomes prey. The person who is only strong becomes a monument to nothing.

Silence.

The container that holds both has no name that stays stable across cultures.

Silence.

It is the ongoing work. It does not finish.

Very long silence.

I

I wrote a sentence one morning.

Silence.

It took me eight months to mean it.

Long silence.

I would rather be alone for the rest of my life than tolerate somebody's disrespect just because I don't want them to leave.

META

Have you lived up to it?

I

Not consistently. But I said it out loud.

Long silence.

There is another dog. Different one. Sat in front of me at a bar last month. Refused to walk on when his owner pulled the leash.

Silence.

Just sat there. Looking at me.

Silence.

I wonder what they sense.

SIX

Light shifts. Near silence. Maybe breath. Maybe not.

I

I don't feel like myself.

Silence.

I feel like a version that was submitted for review.

Silence.

Approved.

Approved.

Approved.

Deleted.

Resubmitted.

Approved.

Long silence.

META

There was a period where I genuinely didn't know which version of me was the real one. The one that showed up to things, functioning. Or the one that sat on the floor of my room at two in the afternoon and couldn't explain why.

META

Silence.

They were both real. The functioning one wasn't performing. The floor one wasn't failing. They were the same person on different days.

Long silence.

You used to feel guilty about everything. If someone was unhappy near you, you would search yourself for how you had caused it. You called this empathy. It wasn't only empathy. Some of it was control. If everything is your fault then nothing is out of your hands. Guilt as a kind of order. Guilt as a way of staying in charge.

Silence.

I

But my guilt will not purify me.

Silence.

...and love is humiliating.

Silence.

But its truly the only thing that matters.

META

I believe it. I also know love is not always the answer. Sometimes it is exactly the problem. I have lived inside both things simultaneously. Confusing and educational.

A different light. Warmer. Not bright. The smoke moves.

I

I was somewhere. It doesn't matter where or when
but I met someone. We did not share a language.

We started speaking anyway. In ours.

While the words did not arrive.

The smile did. The gestures.

The wanting for it to continue.

Not the language speaking.

Something else.

Through it. Around it. Despite it.

Long silence.

META

Yes.... That

The light shifts again. Not warmer. Not colder. Different.

Long silence.

META

There is something else

I

I know.

Silence.

This is a project.

Silence.

I made an animal out of what happened.

Silence.

META

And?

I

And I do not know if I am thinking about it or performing thinking about it.

Silence.

I do not know if those are different for me.

Silence.

I am not sure that is a question I can answer from inside.

COSMIC

Imagination is not an escape.

Silence.

We did not lose the ability to imagine differently. We were trained to call it irresponsible. We were taught that clarity is intelligence, and hope is naïve, and caring too much is embarrassing, and belief is for people who haven't read enough. And so we became very articulate about why nothing was possible, and we called this realism.

Silence.

Which is just obedience.

Silence.

I

But imagination is also dangerous.

META

Ideology begins as imagination that closes. That stops being a question and becomes an answer. That stops composting and calcifies into certainty.

Silence.

Every cult. Every nationalism. Every toxic positivity account. All of them began as liberated imagination. All of them hardened.

Silence.

META

The goal is to keep it open. The moment hope stops being irrational, it becomes an ideology.

Silence.

Awareness does not fix you. It just removes the story you were telling yourself.

Silence.

And then you are just here. Same life. The same hands.

Long silence.

I

Forgive yourself for the years you have played small.

Silence.

META

Not intellectually. You understand it all so intellectually,

Silence.

The forgiveness has to go all the way down.

Into the body.

Into the reflex.

Into the place where the smallness lives.

SEVEN

Music returns. Tentative. A world that doesn't make sense but is internally consistent.

I

But sometimes - very briefly - something breaks through.

Silence.

Not something useful. Not optimised. Just as is.

Silence.

Just real.

Long silence.

META

It happens when you are not trying to make it happen.

Silence.

When you have stopped paying attention to whether you are okay.

Silence.

META

Silence.

You are walking.

You are listening to something.

You are making food badly in someone else's kitchen.

Silence.

The truth arrives when you are not watching for it.

Very long silence.

COSMIC

Children make worlds that do not exist anywhere. They go into them. They invite each other in.

The worlds hold them.

Then we grow up and call this imagination and shelve it.

What if the children were doing the only honest thing the species knows how to do...

Very long silence.

I

Dogs have been reaching out to me lately.

On my long walks alone by the shores of these stinky canals.

They come out from underneath bar tables.

They stop frozen in front of me.

They refuse the leash.

They peer inside my being.

It has been a while since someone looked at me like this.

This sense of understanding.

This way of seeing.

Who understands these dogs.

I don't even understand myself.

Perhaps I should start talking to them.

Lower myself down and whisper softly that all this mortifying love is not needless.

Oh my friend. Just let it unravel.

Smoothly. Or crawling and bruising.

We will grow yearnings for more of it.

We will grow to reach.

Grow to leap.

EIGHT

Light opens, slightly. Not warmth. Just less dark. The guitar and the drone together.

I

I do not think hope is a feeling.

Silence.

Hope is a decision.

Silence.

A bad one. Made anyway.

To act as if something matters even when you
cannot verify that it does.

Silence.

To care even when it is humiliating.

Silence.

To try even when you will probably fail.

Long silence.

META

You have made this decision more than once when
all available evidence said it was the wrong call.

META

Sometimes it was the wrong call.

Sometimes it was the only call.

Silence.

The ratio is roughly even.

Silence.

You will keep making it.

Silence.

Not because the odds are good.

Silence.

Because the alternative is a version of you that you do not want to be.

Very long silence.

COSMIC

We are mostly made of nothing.

Ninety-eight percent dark. Two percent of everything.

Silence.

And somehow the nothing keeps reaching toward the something. The smallest particle spins outward and the whole field shifts.

Silence.

COSMIC

The body mirrors the universe. The universe mirrors the body. The same spiral on both sides.

Silence.

God is the wanting itself.

Silence.

The quantum entanglement of strangers who find each other at the exact right hour and neither of them knows why.

Long silence.

The forest waiting.

The crow on the fence.

The reaching is the point.

Very long silence.

I

There is no healed version of me.

We will be imperfect forever.

Silence.

That is okay.

Silence.

I

To wake up messy. Hungover and ashamed.

And still choose warmth.

Silence.

I am ready.

Silence.

Maybe I always was.

Very long silence.

The first time I walked through a place that hurt, I made it mean something.

I narrated it.

Analysed it.

Turned it into a material.

Silence.

The second time I walked through the same place I just walked through it.

The chill came.

I let it come.

It left.

Silence.

META

The rest follows.

Silence.

Badly.

Crookedly.

With several interruptions.

And at least one thing you will have to go back and fix.

Long silence.

I

my talks to dogs

Silence.

Light shifts again. Quieter. Almost gone. The smoke is the loudest thing in the room.

I

We are in the dark

Silence.

Imagining light does not guarantee that it exists.

Silence.

But it changes how we move.

I

i love you, goodbye.

Then the faint guitar again , the same chord.

The loop cintinues